

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 IO-13 DHA-02 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 H-01
SCS-03 SCA-01 PC-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 AID-05
EURE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9116

INFO USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 385

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 1759

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UK, CT, US

SUBJ: RELEASE OF WESTERN JOURNALIST

REF: PARIS 23614

1. WE ARE APPALLED AT GOLDSMITH'S REPORT OF HIS INCARCERATION.
IMMEDIATE QUESTION IS HOW TO GET ACROSS TO BOKASSA AND HIS
GOVERNMENT CONCERN AT OUTRAGEOUS TREATMENT METED OUT TO GOLDSMITH
IN EARLY DAYS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT. ONE POSSIBLE APPROACH MIGHT
BE FOR BRITISH TO MAKE A HIGH LEVEL FORMAL PROTEST ABOUT TREATMENT
OF ONE OF THEIR CITIZENS. HOWEVER, WE OBVIOUSLY CAN NOT STAND IDLY
BY AND NEED TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS OF OUR OWN TO DEMONSTRATE OUR
SHOCK AT THIS FLAGRANT DISREGARD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. PROBLEM IS HOW
TO DO THIS WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE 300 OTHER AMERICANS WHO LIVE
AND WORK IN THE CAE.

2. THE BEATING OF GOLDSMITH WAS OBVIOUSLY THE IRRATIONAL RESPONSE
OF AN ENRAGED MAN WHO SAW HIS ENTIRE SYSTEM OF RULE HELD UP TO
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RIDICULE. SUCH BRUTALITY REFLECTS THE EXTREME PRESSURE UNDER
WHICH HE MUST FEEL HIMSELF IN TRYING TO SET UP THE EMPIRE AND
ITS ATTENDANT TRAPPINGS.

3. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON HOW (OR WHETHER) THE AMERICAN PRESS PLAYS
THE GOLDSMITH/RANDAL STORIES AND TO THE DEGREE THAT THESE STORIES
ARE PICKED-UP AND CARRIED IN FRANCE AND ON THE RADIO. BOKASSA

IS HOLDING IN RESERVE GOLDSMITH'S SIGNED STATEMENT. IF GOLDSMITH ADMITTED TO ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OR ESPIONAGE OR IDENTIFIED HIS SOURCES, BOKASSA WILL PRESUMABLY USE THIS INFORMATION AGAINST US. WE CAN EXPECT A PUBLIC OR PRIVATE TIRADE (OR BOTH). THE EMBASSY REMAINS THE MOST LIKELY TARGET OF HIS WRATH AND IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THAT HE WILL DECLARE ONE OR MORE OF US PERSONA NON GRATA.

4. WE DO NOT THINK IT LIKELY THAT HE WILL GO OUT AFTER THE PEACE CORPS OR AID AT THIS TIME OR TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE MISSIONARIES WHO CURRENTLY ENJOY EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE CAE. THE VOLUNTEERS'S SAFETY DOES NOT SEEM TO BE IN JEOPARDY BUT WE ARE ASKING THEM AND EMBASSY STAFF TO BE RESERVED AND CAREFUL. CERTAINLY ALL THE SIGNS THAT I AND THE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR HAVE RECEIVED IN RECENT DAYS POINT TO THE FACT THAT BOKASSA AND HIS GOVERNMENT WANT THESE PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE. WHETHER THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE DEPENDS ON HOW THE GOLDSMITH CASE EVOLVES AND WHETHER OR NOT THERE ARE FURTHER INCIDENTS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS. IN ANY EVENT WE WILL HAVE TO CAREFULLY REEVALUATE OUR VARIOUS PROGRAMS AS TIME GOES ON.

5. GOLDSMITH'S TREATMENT IS NOT A SUBJECT WHICH LENDS ITSELF TO DIALOGUE WITH BOKASSA - GIVEN HIS OWN DIRECT INVOLVEMENT. ONCE STORY BREAKS, WE CAN AND SHOULD EXPRESS PUBLICLY IN WASHINGTON OUR INDIGNATION. DEPARTMENT MAY ALSO WISH TO NOTE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES THAT EMBASSY HAD HEARD RUMOR THAT GOLDSMITH HAD BEEN BEATEN (BANGUI 1511). CHARGE IMMEDIATELY
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RAISED THIS WITH HIGHEST LEVEL CAE OFFICIALS HE WAS ABLE TO CONTACT, EXPRESSING CONCERN AND USING THIS AS REASON FOR URGENCY IN SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. SINCE THE RUMOR HAD BEEN THAT BOTH RANDAL AND GOLDSMITH WERE BEATEN, WE HAD BEEN REASSURED WHEN RANDAL WAS RELEASED UNHARMED THE DAY AFTER WE HEARD THE RUMOR.

6. THEREAFTER, IT WILL BE A CASE OF SHOWING THROUGH OUR ACTS THAT WE ARE WATCHING CENTRAL AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS BEHAVIOR AND WILL MAKE THIS THE TOUCHSTONE IN PURSUING OUR VARIOUS ONGOING PROJECTS WHICH THEY WANT. WE SHOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT SIGN ANY NEW AGREEMENTS AT THIS TIME. THE FACT IS THAT LITTLE THAT WE DO WILL CHANGE BOKASSA'S IDIOSYNCRATIC BEHAVIOR NOR CHECK HIS FLASHES OF UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE. AT THIS MOMENT WE ARE FACED WITH AN ISOLATED INCIDENT OF PARTICULAR BRUTALITY. THE FRENCH HAVE FACED SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE PAST. TO THE EXTENT THAT BOKASSA WILL TRY TO MODERATE HIS BEHAVIOR, AS HE DID TO A CERTAIN EXTENT AFTER THE 1972 PUBLIC BEATING INCIDENT, IT WILL BE BECAUSE HE SEES INTERNATIONAL PRESS COVERAGE DAMAGING HIS IMAGE AND INHIBITING HIS ACCESS TO RESOURCES. HIS STAKE IN RELATIONS WITH US ALONE, HOWEVER, IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE, AND WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT OUR ACTS IF TAKEN IN ISOLATION CAN ONLY CREATE

RISKS FOR OUR MANY FELLOW CITIZENS IN THE CAE. WHATEVER STANCE
WE TAKE SHOULD KEEP THIS FACT IN MIND.

7. UNDER THESE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES I DO NOT THINK I SHOULD TRY TO
LEAVE HERE THURSDAY. HOWEVER, CONSULTATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT
MAY BE USEFUL IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, AND I AWAIT THE
DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON THAT POINT AND ON ANY DEMARCHES IT MAY
WISH ME TO MAKE.
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